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SECRET SOVIET CITIES IN SIBERIA

The once empty wastes of Siberia are systematically being populated and developed by the Soviets. There are now east of the Urals 120 cities with populations in excess of 100,000, most of them not shown on any map. Many of them are really slave labor camps built around a few factories. The total population of Siberia is now said to be more than 40 million.

The most secret of the secret cities is in Central Asia south of Lake Baykal, known by the code name X 71 or -- to the outside world -- as Atomgrad. Tannu Tuva, the Mongol area in which the city was located, is now part of the USSR [Tuvinskaya Autonomous Oblast]. The only information available on the area is that reported by Manchen-Helfen, a German scientist who visited Mongolia shortly before 1930.

It is not known how many plants make up the atomic installations in X 71, but there is no doubt that Tannu Tuva is the USSR's chief atomic research center. The installations cannot be seen from the air since they are hidden in the galleries of caves, which serve the additional purpose of protecting them from air attack. The area is surrounded by high mountains, and the passes are guarded by MVD sentinels. The workers are slave laborers; there are very few native Mongols left, and there is no postal service to the outside world.

Dalstroy is the name given to the Kolyma River area [Dalstroy is a construction project of the MVD operating in this area, but is not known to be a name used for the area generally] which once had a population of 5,500 nomads but where about 500,000 slave laborers now work. The area is completely in the hands of the MVD, and has no connection with the Siberian administration. There is a direct telephone line to the Kremlin; the administrative head is all powerful and accountable only to the MVD. The area has its special police and also air and ground forces.

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The main importance of the area to the Soviets lies in its gold mines, which have yielded an estimated 15 billion [unit not specified]. To aid transportation, not only has the Siberian railway been double-tracked, but 12 roads have secretly been built.

Another city ruled by the police is Nikeri [Nikel'?] formerly Salmijärvi, in the Petsamo area, only a short distance from the Norwegian border. The town is the center of very rich nickel deposits. When it passed from Finland to the USSR, the Finnish population was moved elsewhere and replaced by convicts. The city is now ringed by innumerable sentry towers.

Another secret city is Borentsburg in the Norwegian Spitzbergen islands. The Soviets obtained the coal mine concession at Eisfjord in 1932. The city is now completely isolated, and no foreigners are allowed to enter the area. Some military specialists believe that the Soviets have turned the area into a base for radio-controlled rockets.

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